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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of OperationsFROM : [REDACTED]
Chief, East Asia Division

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SUBJECT : Humanitarian Aid for Laos

1. On 22 October 1981 a meeting was held at the State Department to discuss the advisability of making a one-time humanitarian aid grant to Laos for the purpose of improving the tenure of official relations and facilitating a more forthcoming attitude by the LPDR on the MIA/POW issue. The meeting was chaired by DAS O'Donohue. Attendees included James Lilley of the NSC; DAS Armitage of DOD/ISA [REDACTED] of the NIO Staff; Desaix Anderson of the East Asia Bureau (VNR); and [REDACTED] of this Division.

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2. The proposal was originated by Representatives John R. LeBoutillier (R-NY) and William Hendon (R-NC) who on their own initiative visited Vientiane in early September. You spoke with Representative LeBoutillier on this subject following his return to Washington. He also raised the proposal with other senior members of the Administration.

3. The Department has identified the availability of \$125,000 from AID/OFDA funds which could be used to purchase medical supplies for Vientiane's principal hospital, described as being in "appalling" condition. The state of the hospital, according to AID officials, would qualify the institution for disaster assistance, under which this initiative could be justified.

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4. It was the opinion of the attendees that there would be no major disadvantages in implementing this assistance but there is little likelihood it would contribute to inducing more cooperation from the LPDR on the MIA/POW issue. DAS O'Donohue pointed out, that this humanitarian gesture was directly responsive to the LeBoutillier-Hendon initiative to improve relations. The Department will move forward to implement purchase and delivery.

5. In a related MIA/POW development, plans are being made for a joint DOD-State mission headed by DAS Armitage to visit Hanoi and Vientiane to put additional pressure on the SRV and LPDR to account for Americans missing in action. This mission will be responsive to continuing Congressional and MIA/League of Families interest.

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Attachment: State Memorandum on Congressional Interest

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